

Save Foggy Bottom...It's Where We Live!

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FOGGY BOTTOM NEWS

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March 29, 2006

A Message from the President

Let's keep it simple. We want to enforce the current Campus Plan.

I know sometimes the back and forth between the FBA and George Washington University is confusing and it gets old as well. We seem to always be "fussing" as someone said recently And GW likes to minimize the problems it creates in our neighborhood even more by labeling them as typical "town / gown conflicts." Why can't we just get along, as some might say?

There are many times when I wonder when or if that will ever happen, and wish that it could. We worked long and hard to achieve the 2000-2010 Campus Plan, GW is up against the limits of this plan, and already wants us to throw it out. We want to see it enforced. After all, isn't that what a Campus Plan is supposed to do, control university growth so it doesn't choke the neighborhood?

GW has legions of paid lawyers working to circumvent any Campus Plan restrictions and filing lawsuits to sap the will of city officials to oppose GW's unfettered growth. GW has paid lobbyists prowling the halls of City Hall, and an actual director of real estate development. GW has paid PR people to spin the press constantly while outside real estate partners run splashy ads to convince you that you should turn your neighborhood over to GW to "get the retail excitement you've been waiting for" on Square 54. (Read, a giant shopping mall in the middle of residential Foggy Bottom.)

But we finally have a city official who has courage and strength of purpose. He truly cares about city residents, and is working long hours to hold institutions like GW accountable. His name is Bill Crews, he is the new zoning administrator, bill.crews@dc.gov. He has taken on the task of doing a headcount audit of GW students, faculty and staff, to determine if GW is complying with the current 2000-2010 Campus Plan.

GW wants us toss this plan and embrace a new one, to go into effect now and run from 2006 to 2025. It's an invitation to a 20-year development free for

all, allowing for another 3 million (yes, million) square feet of development in the middle of Foggy Bottom, which city health officials have already said is at the tipping point of livability from an air and population standpoint.

Nowhere is there an intelligent plan that acknowledges that GW's future growth will have to occur outside of Foggy Bottom, at other-independent-campus, elsewhere in the metropolitan area. And that those students can't be bussed in to this campus, like they currently are, while claiming that those students should not be counted in any "headcount" as required under the current Campus Plan restriction of 20,000 students.

Fortunately, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A (ANC 2A) voted 3-2 last week to support the audit Mr. Crews is doing, and to urge the city to enforce the current campus plan. Newly elected ANC Member Michael Thomas led the way, with Chair Vince Micone and veteran neighborhood activist Dorothy Miller supporting the resolution. Disappointingly, realtor Anne Savage and former university dean Jim Morris sided with GW, and voted against the effort to have an audit of student enrollment done to determine if GW is complying with the current Campus Plan.

We commend the ANC 2A commissioners for standing up for the neighborhood, doing their job to protect the residential community. Their first, and only concern, should be to protect the well-being of our residential community, not protecting GW's unlimited (and improper) growth. We ask that those commissioners who voted against the neighborhood think carefully about what it means to be an elected representative in this community. We all have to live here together. We know the only way we can save Foggy Bottom is to work together to do it. That may not make us popular with GW officials, but we can look our neighbors in the eye. And you know what? We're going to win. Go to www.savefoggybottom.com and join us.

— Joy Howell

ANC Vote Backs Full Headcount at GWU Calls for Counting All Students, as Stated in Campus Plan

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A voted at its March 15 meeting to support a measure backed by the FBA that would ensure GWU count all of its students in accordance with its current campus plan.

A somewhat contentious 3-2 vote backed the measure, put forth by new West End ANC Commissioner Michael Thomas, who was sitting at his first ANC meeting. Joining Thomas were ANC Chair Vince Micone and Dorothy Miller, while commissioners Anne Savage and James Morris voted against it.

Micone said he had studied the language of the headcount issue carefully and came to the conclusion, based on the school's existing 10-year campus plan, that all students should be included.

"In this resolution, what we are asking is that the Zoning Administrator refer to condition 8," a short section of the campus plan order, Micone said, "that does not include exclu-

sions" in student headcounts.

"The only authority for that is in the written [campus plan] order itself," he said. "It's all about counting numbers."

At issue is whether GWU's enrollment is below its agreed-to cap of 20,000 students in the plan, which expires at the end of 2009. The university has put forth a proposed new, 20-year campus plan that would begin in 2010 (see FBN, 3-15).

The commission's action followed a 4-1 vote by the ANC in November opposing the university's proposed plans for a commercial development on Square 54, the former GW hospital site, in part because the school is out of compliance with its campus plan (FBN, 12-14-05).

Bids to Soften Measure Rejected

Commissioners Savage and Morris wanted several of the measure's eight statements reworked or removed, but their efforts failed, as did a motion to delay the vote, proposed in part because Vice Chair David Lehrman was not present.

Micone reiterated that he had studied the language of the campus plan carefully, and Thomas would not agree to remove any provisions which, Micone said, "a lot of work had gone into" preparing.

Morris, a former university dean, said that to college administrators, "enrollment and headcount are not the same thing."

Thomas said in response that language in GWU's 10-year campus plan refers to "aggregate human activity" and students'

overall impacts to the neighborhood. Such impacts of the school's growth have been an important issue to the FBA.

"It is reasonable to keep current campus plan-implemented," said Jim O'Leary, an FBA board member who attended the hearing.

"The ANC needs to support the community and take a position to enforce current campus plan," O'Leary said. "We're extremely disappointed that commissioners Savage and Morris did not support us in our battle to save the community."

"GWU wants new campus plan — a 20-year free-for-all. The university is not in compliance and there should be no exclusions. We need an enforcement mechanism," he said.

Opposition Remains to 20th St. Hotel

In other action, the ANC did not approve a revised plan by developers proposing a Marriott Courtyard hotel on 20th Street between E and F Sts.

Developers, who want to convert an existing parking garage into a hotel, said they had scaled back the hotel's height and allowed several spaces for cabs or cars to unload, in an attempt to ease traffic concerns.

Commissioners let die a motion put forth by Morris that it reconsider the proposal, as none seconded it. Micone said the ANC's previous position opposing the measure remained.

The ANC had opposed the plans at its February meeting (see FBN, 3-1). A hearing, pushed back from March, is scheduled before the Board of Zoning Adjustment on April 11.

— FBN

Mendelson: City Looking at Sq. 37 in 'Air Rights' Debate

The District government is considering the fate of Square 37, which includes the West End branch library and the police department's special operations unit, as it looks at the issue of selling "air rights" above city facilities.

At-large council member Phil Mendelson (D), who took questions at ANC 2A's March 15 meeting, said in response to questions that developers were looking at the site.

The city held a hearing on the air-rights issue in mid-March, with the measure backed by Council Chair Linda Cropp (D), who is also a mayoral candidate.

"I don't quite know what Linda Cropp was thinking when she introduced it," Mendelson said. "Not every site is appropriate for this."

At the start of the ANC meeting, Commissioner Dorothy Miller said she found the air rights issue "egregious" and said opponents of the measure at the council hearing had said "this city is being run by developers, for developers."

Mendelson said the council had not scheduled a vote on the issue.

— FBN

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c/o West End Library
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The Foggy Bottom Association was formed by a group of citizens in 1955 and was formally incorporated in 1959. Attendance at FBA meetings is open to all residents of Foggy Bottom and the West End.

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SECRETARY — Jill Nevius • TREASURER — Russell Conlan
MEMBERSHIP — Edward B. Gable Jr.

FBA Board of Directors:

Ellie Becker, Joseph G. Chaplick, Elizabeth B. Elliott,
Jacqueline G. Lemire, Michael G. Malloy, James R. O'Leary,
Ronald Cocome (Immediate Past President; Ex Officio)

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SQUARE 54

ANOTHER BROKEN PROMISE FROM GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

WHAT THE COMMUNITY WANTS ON SQUARE 54:

ON-CAMPUS HOUSING FOR UNDERGRADUATES

Square 54 is located inside the GWU campus boundary, away from the residential community to the south and west.

ON-CAMPUS CLASSROOMS

Square 54 is part of the GWU Campus Core and would alleviate the need for students to go several blocks off campus or further out into the residential areas.

MEETING SPACE FOR STUDENT GROUPS

Students often can't find any place to meet because GWU rents out the Marvin Center, their supposed meeting place.

GREEN SPACE

The late Maria Tyler, longtime Foggy Bottom advocate, insisted that the best use for Square 54 would be a park to complement Washington Circle.

WHAT GWU WANTS ON SQUARE 54:

AN OVERSIZED, FOR-PROFIT, COMMERCIAL AND RETAIL DEVELOPMENT SMACK IN THE MIDDLE OF FOGGY BOTTOM

No classrooms, no student residences, no greenspace. More development for thousands more residents, office workers and cars, in addition to 20,000+ GWU students—an overwhelming burden for our fragile residential community.

WHAT CITY HEALTH ADMINISTRATORS SAY:

FOGGY BOTTOM IS A NEIGHBORHOOD THAT OFFICIALS BELIEVE IS AT THE "TIPPING POINT" FOR LIVABILITY AND GOOD HEALTH.

Go to www.savefoggybottom.com and sign up for more information about this project. Stay tuned for further Foggy Bottom Association messages about Square 54.

Photo: M. Malloy

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April 5, 2006

Council Chair Candidate Gray Addresses FBA

City Councilmember Vincent Gray (D-Ward 7) gave an outline on education, health care and other key issues facing the city in a crucial election year at the FBA's March 27 monthly meeting at the Melrose Hotel.

Gray, running for Council Chair against Councilmember Kathy Patterson (D-Ward 3), said that affordable housing and rent control are "probably the biggest issue before the council right now."

He said the council was likely to vote in April on rent-control measures sponsored by Councilmember Jim Graham (D-Ward 1), with competing provisions proposed by Mayor Williams also being considered.

Gray gave a detailed outline of the city's education system, which he said was in financial trouble, and said he supported everything from spending more money for quality teachers to reducing teenage parenting, which he called "a contributor to so much of our social pathology."

Gray supports school modernization and upgrading facilities, though does not support school vouchers, which he said conflicted with public education goals.

He said the city has a "crisis in health care" and said he supported a measure that would encourage health care providers such as doctors and nurses to work in underserved



Council Chair Contender: D.C. Council member Vincent Gray (D-Ward 7), a candidate for Council Chair, was the featured speaker at the FBA's March 27 monthly meeting.

Photos: FBN

areas for four years, while in exchange the city would pay off part of their student loans.

Although he has only been on the council for 15 months – and would not have to relinquish his seat, should he lose the election for chair – Gray said he had led various groups for the past 20 years in Ward 7, including the Covenant House, which helps homeless and the needy.

Supporting a Dialogue

In response to questions from Foggy Bottom residents, Gray said he did not have a position on a proposal, backed by Ward 2 Councilmember Jack Evans (D), to tear down the Whitehurst Freeway. He said that "on the surface, it seemed like more traffic would feed into the local streets," if the longtime freeway was torn down.

In response to a recent *Washington Post* account of the city's plan to install more free Internet service in poorer areas of D.C. – one of which included much of the GWU campus – Gray said that he "would be happy to make the argument that that doesn't fit."

"There's no way you can equate GW with living in Ward 7 or 8," said Gray, who did both his undergraduate and graduate work at GWU. "That's ludicrous," he said.

He did say that if elected as

GWU, School Without Walls Set Plan for Renovation, New Dorm on F Street

George Washington University and School Without Walls, the alternative public high school in GWU's campus on G Street, unveiled plans for renovation of SWW and for the university's planned new dormitory surrounding the high school.

The project, to be proposed this month as a planned unit development (PUD) which

would need a zoning waiver, would be for an addition to the existing school and for the residence hall behind it, which would face F Street.

Both parties spoke in favor of the plan at a public meeting March 23 at GWU's hospital.

SWW Principal Sheila Harris said she was "tickled pink" at the plans for the high school, which has been in existence since 1971 and now has 340 students. The renovations would allow the school to take in more students, she said.

"School Without Walls is a metaphor for the kind of educational process that occurs within the walls," she said.

Tom Brady, chief business officer of the D.C. School Board, also spoke in favor of the plan, as did GWU Treasurer Lou Katz. GWU offers class slots for students and teachers from the high school, including physical education classes, as the school has no gym facilities.

Sean O'Donnell, an architect with Ehrenkrantz, Eckstut & Kuhn, who designed the project, said the plans emphasize leaving much of the natural light that

comes in through the school's large windows.

'Most Attractive Housing'

GWU will pay \$12.2 million for the school's land – a parking lot and a tennis court behind it for the dorm location. Katz said he believed there would be "little opposition" to the proposed plan from the community.

The dorm, which is designed to have units for four people with individual bedrooms, would cater to upper classmen, Katz said, presumably keeping such students in the campus's main area and out of the Foggy Bottom historic district.

"We think it will be our most attractive housing," Katz said.

The proposed PUD – to be filed separately from the university's recent proposed 20-year campus plan – would increase density on the block to a floor-area-ratio (FAR) of 5.14, Katz said, "slightly higher" than the rest of the campus plan. FAR is a measurement of how densely buildings or blocks are zoned and developed.

The two said they envisioned construction taking 18 months to two years and to be complete by 2009.

– FBN

KenCen Tour Set for Tuesday

The FBA has made arrangements for a backstage tour of the Kennedy Center for members of the Foggy Bottom / West End community. It will be held next Tuesday, April 11, at 6 p.m.

The tour will be led by Mickey Berra, the center's vice president of production, who has many wonderful stories to tell along with detailed descriptions of backstage workings. Please join us for a fascinating behind-the-scenes look at the Kennedy Center's performance spaces!

Space is limited and reservations, required, will be honored in the order received. Please call 202-338-2079 or e-mail FBA Board member Jackie Lemire at jglemire@aol.com, with your name and phone number.

chair, he would be "happy [to be] part of a process of getting the parties to the table," in response to questions about supporting the FBA as it sought to have GWU's campus plan enforced.

Gray also said he was not likely to support any mayoral candidate in the upcoming race.

– FBN



See you in September: Lt. Phillip Lanciano of the Metropolitan Police Department made an appearance at the FBA meeting last week – his last until September. Lt. Lanciano is off to the F.B.I. National Academy in Quantico, Va., for three months of training, to be followed by a two-month leave with his children.

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